



**TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**CENTRAL OFFICE**  
CORNERSTONE SQUARE BUILDING, SUITE 305  
530 CHURCH STREET  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0745  
(615) 741-5825 FAX (615) 253-1886  
[www.state.tn.us/humanrights](http://www.state.tn.us/humanrights)

**November 17, 2006**  
**Board of Commissioner's**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioner's Present:**

Commissioner Davis  
Commissioner Garrett  
Commissioner Hakeem  
Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Pierce  
Commissioner Rogers (via Phone)  
Commissioner Smith  
Commissioner Starling  
Chairman Wiggins

**Commissioner's Absent:**

Commissioner Horne  
Commissioner Walker  
Commissioner Pride

**Staff Present:**

Amber D. Gooding, Executive Director  
Idris Keith, Deputy Director  
Robert Bright, Housing Director  
Shay Rose, General Counsel  
Gloria Williams, Assistant Counsel  
Lisa Lancaster, Executive Director's Assistant

**Guests:**

None

**Call to Order & Invocation**

Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call was taken. Commissioner Jones offered the invocation.

**Minutes & Roll Call**

The minutes of the September 22, 2006 board meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Hakeem made a motion to accept the minutes. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion.

**Announcements**

Amber Gooding, Executive Director, introduced Idris Keith to the Commissioners who was welcomed by the board and noted that previous Deputy Antonio Adams has taken the position of the ADA Compliance Officer for the City of Memphis.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director, Amber Gooding reported that the Annual Report was almost complete and would be distributed to the board members upon completion.

Commissioner Garrett made a motion to accept the Executive Director's report. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

### **Law & Legislation Committee Report**

The Law & Legislation Committee having met on October 11, 2006 and again on November 17, 2006 to discuss the needed changes to the THRC Rules, provided copies of the proposed rule changes to the board members and General Counsel, Shalini Rose explained that it was necessary to make the proposed changes in order to clarify and streamline the Commission's role in settlements and mediations.

Commissioner Garrett and General Counsel Rose conducted a line by line review of the changes recommended by the Law & Legislation Committee. Commissioner Garrett recommended approval of the changes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hakeem. General Counsel Rose explained that the 10 day notice could be waived if two thirds of the commission was present. Commissioner Pride made a motion to accept the rule changes. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the proposed changes. The results were: Davis – yes; Garrett – yes; Hakeem – yes; Jones – yes; Pierce – yes; Rogers – yes; Smith – yes; Starling – yes; Wiggins – yes. A signature sheet was also required.

### **Bylaws Report**

Executive Director Gooding and Commissioner Pierce, having revised the current bylaws, presented copies to the Board via mail and reviewed them with Commissioner Pride, Commissioner Garrett, General Counsel Rose, Deputy Director Adams, and Assistant Counsel Williams on October 11, 2006. Copies of the proposed bylaws were provided to the board and Commissioner Pierce reviewed the proposed changes. Commissioner Smith requested that the seven protected classes be added to the mission statement and the board agreed. Commissioner Pierce recommended approval and Commissioner Starling seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Commissioner Garrett reported on the Nominating Committee meeting that was held on November 7, 2006. The proposal from the committee to the board was to nominate for the year 2007, Nathan Pride as Vice Chair of the West Division, Patricia Pierce as Vice Chair of the Middle Division, Robin Smith as Vice Chair of the East Division; to re-elect Spencer Wiggins as Chairman; to nominate A.J. Starling as secretary. Commissioner Davis made a motion to accept the committee's recommendation. Commissioner Hakeem seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

Chairman Wiggins recommended that Executive Director Gooding be reappointed for another year. He also recommended that because of her remarkable turnaround of the agency and the positive new direction the agency is going in, that she be given a 5% pay increase. Commissioner Hakeem made the motion to accept the Chairman's proposal and Commissioner Garrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

Executive Director Gooding thanked the board for their vote of confidence and noted her commitment to improve the agency as we move into the coming year.

### **Communications and Outreach Update**

Executive Director Amber Gooding updated the Board on the vacant Communications Officer position. The agency is expected to fill this vacant position in near future due to the many outreach events scheduled around the state in the near future. Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Starling will be taping PSA's that will begin airing in December on Clear Channel. Additional PSA's for Katrina victims experiencing housing discrimination will also air in the next couple of months.

Forums are scheduled for Chattanooga and Clarksville. THRC will co-host Quad State in March, January is Black History Month and April is Fair Housing Month. Commissioner Pierce requested registration forms for outreach activities be sent to all commissioner's. Executive Director agreed to make registration forms available. Commissioner Garrett made a motion to accept the report. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion.

### **Employment Case Report**

Deputy Director, Idris Keith, updated the board on the most recent employment numbers. A total of 125 employment cases have been closed and 13 settlements have been reached since September 2006. Commissioner Starling made a motion to accept the employment case report. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

### **Housing Case Report**

Housing Director, Robert Bright, reported that 14 housing cases have been received and 15 closed since September 2006. Currently there are 36 cases in inventory with 24 cases closed for the total period.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to accept the housing case report. Commissioner Garrett seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

### **Legal Report**

Shalini Rose, General Counsel, updated the Board on 23 employment and housing cause cases. Settlement, docketing for hearing, training, and conciliation, among other possible solutions were discussed. Commissioner Starling made a motion to accept the legal report. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion.

Housing Director, Robert Bright reported that a bi-lingual investigator has been hired for the housing office in Knoxville.

Chairman Wiggins congratulated the new officers and thanked the Executive Director and THRC staff for the amazing job that is being done. Happy Holidays were wished for all.

With no further business to address, Chairman Wiggins adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.